

that makes \$2 million a year, you feel like it's fair to you, there's not some sense of somebody else gets more benefits than I do out of this Code. It's a simple, straightforward Code.

So, we're going to make it neutral, we're going to make it simple, and we're going to try to make it as efficient as we possibly can. And I know the words "efficient" and "Federal Government" don't go together very often, but when we start a Code, we should start it as simple as we possibly can.

The last time there was a major reform of the Tax Code was in the 1980s, and it was to simplify the Code. Since that time, it has grown more and more and more complex again. I have every belief that if we go through the long process of simplifying our Code, which dramatically needs reform, if we will simplify our Code again, in the days ahead, future Congresses will make it more complicated again. That's the nature of government. I understand that. I'm just saying it's past time to do the simplification again.

We need to have significant reform, and not reform that's defined as: How do we stick it to a certain group to make sure they pay more? Reform that's actually reform, that fixes our broken system and walks Americans through a process where they can pay taxes, as we all love to do, but can at least pay taxes in a way that they believe is fair and neutral and consistent from year to year.

With that, I yield back the balance of my time.

APRIL 21, 1836, SAN JACINTO DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. WENSTRUP). Under the Speaker's announced policy of January 3, 2013, the Chair recognizes the gentleman from Texas (Mr. POE) for 30 minutes.

Mr. POE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, as we approach April 21 this year, that is a day of importance to those of us who are from Texas.

April 21, in Houston, when I was growing up, was a holiday. My mother, who was also born on April 21, used to tell me and my sister that we had a school holiday because it was her birthday. I didn't learn that that wasn't really correct until I got to seventh grade Texas history, when I learned that April 21 was to commemorate a battle that took place in Texas, which we now call San Jacinto Day.

Most Americans have never heard of that, but that event, April 21, 1836, is of historical significance, not only to Texans, but really to all Americans.

Texas was first controlled by the nation of France up until 1689. And then the Spanish Government, country, took over the control of what we now call Texas and controlled it for over 130 years until 1821—1690 to 1821.

The nation of Mexico revolted against Spanish oppression, and in 1821 became a republic of itself, and Texas belonged to Mexico until 1836. Texas

declared independence on March 2, 1836. And then we had April 21, 1836, the day of the Battle of San Jacinto.

Well, let me back up a little bit and explain why Texas revolted against Mexico, how it became an independent country for 9 years and then later joined the United States.

Mr. Speaker, here is a map of what Mexico looked like in about 1821 after Mexico had revolted from Spain. It all happened because of the person who took charge of Mexico. His name was Santa Anna.

Santa Anna became President of Mexico in the 1820s and quickly made himself dictator of Mexico. He was supported by the military. He became the military dictator. He abolished the constitution of Mexico. He abolished the Congress of Mexico, and not all of the people in Mexico approved it. In fact, 11 different states in Mexico revolted against this dictatorship.

A lot of times in Mexican or world history, we don't talk about the other revolts in Mexico because of this dictator, because of this tyrant, but it did happen. Eleven states revolted. Those are on this map.

This map shows what Mexico looked like in 1821. The red portions are several of the states that revolted against the dictator, Santa Anna. They were: San Luis Potosi, Queretaro, Durango, Guanajuato, Michoacan, Yucatan, Jalisco, Nuevo Leon, Tamaulipas, Zacatecas, and Coahuila de Texas, which also included Texas. These red areas revolted against Mexican rule.

Santa Anna, being President and Commander in Chief, quickly assembled his professional army and started putting down rebellions in Mexico. In fact, three of these areas claimed to be countries. There was the Republic of the Yucatan. Here is the Yucatan Peninsula, which we have all heard about. There was the Republic of the Rio Grande. And then, of course, there was the Republic of Texas, all claiming independence from the tyrant.

In fact, there was a portion of this revolution that almost succeeded in the interior of Mexico. The Zacatecas area had as good an army as Santa Anna, but their rebellion was put down quickly by Santa Anna. In fact, it was put down so brutally that other areas of the republic began to tremble. So, after these areas were put down in rebellion, Santa Anna moved his army north into what we now call Texas.

The events in Texas occurred simultaneously with all these independent revolts, but this is the event that triggered it. It happened in October of 1835—Texas, a part of Mexico. The small town of Gonzales, Texas, had a cannon that they used to protect themselves from the Apaches, the Karankawas, and other Indian tribes. The Mexican Government decided they would take the arms of the Texans, as they called themselves; they would take the cannon. So a Mexican militia showed up, or a Mexican army showed up at Gonzales demanding return of the

cannon and a skirmish ensued. Guns were fired, and the Texas Revolution was on.

For your information, the Mexican Government was not successful in starting or taking that cannon.

It's interesting to note that the Texas Revolution started, the first battle started, because government tried to take away the arms of the citizens. Interesting enough, you go backwards to Lexington and Concord, if we remember our American history, the British marched to Lexington and Concord, started the battle in the American War of Independence, and the reason: the British Government tried to take the arms, the firearms, of the colonists. They were not successful. And the same event triggered the Texas Revolution. In fact, it was called the "shot heard 'round the world."

But, in any event, the battles and skirmishes occurred. It started in October of 1835 in this area of Texas, San Antonio area primarily.

A group of Texans—really, they were volunteers from all over the United States, almost every State in the United States, a half a dozen foreign countries—had assembled themselves, 187 of these individuals, along with 11 Tejanos. "Tejano" is a uniquely Texan name for Texans of Spanish descent. And those 187 volunteers found themselves in an old beat-up Spanish church that was 100 years old at the time, that we now call the Alamo.

They knew, of course, that Santa Anna had crossed into the United States, or into Texas, across the Rio Grande River and was headed straight for the Alamo. Those defenders, rather than leave, they decided to stay. They knew, of course, that they would not be able to defend and protect the Alamo very long, because Santa Anna's Army was several thousand strong versus 187 Texans.

They were led by one of my most famous or favorite persons in all of history, a 27-year-old lawyer from South Carolina named William Barret Travis. He was the commander of those volunteers at the Alamo. For 13 days they held off the Mexican army; and we've heard the story in the history of the Alamo, how they withstood the onslaught for 13 days.

□ 1420

Travis asked for help, for people to come to the Alamo. No one came to help him except 32 volunteers from, yes, the town of Gonzales. And while he was behind those Alamo walls, he wrote probably the most famous letter written by any military leader in our history. It was dated February 24, 1836. I have a copy of this letter on my wall, as do many Texans that represent Texas in the House of Representatives. I think it's a call to freedom and liberty in the spirit of our ancestors.

He said:

Fellow citizens, I am besieged by 1,000 or more of the enemy under Santa Anna. I have sustained a continual bombardment and cannon fire for over 24 hours, but I have not lost

a man. The enemy has demanded surrender at its discretion; otherwise, the fort will be put to the sword. I've answered that demand with a cannon shot, and the flag still waves proudly over the wall. I shall never surrender or retreat. I call upon you in the name of liberty and patriotism and everything dear to our character to come to my aid with all dispatch. The enemy is receiving reinforcements daily and will no doubt increase to 3,000 or 4,000 in a few days. If this call is neglected, I am determined to sustain myself for as long as possible and die like a soldier who never forgets what is due his honor and that of his country.

Victory or death. William Barret Travis, Commander of the Alamo.

A few days later, on March 6, 1836, after three assaults by Santa Anna's army, the walls were breached and every volunteer was put to the sword.

William Barret Travis in his last letter after this one said that victory will cost Santa Anna more than defeat. He was right. The losses were unbelievable against the Mexican Army, but still they were able to take the Alamo.

Meanwhile, at a place called Washington-on-the-Brazos, a group of volunteers were writing a declaration of independence and then a constitution. And on March 2, four days before the Alamo fell, under the leadership of Sam Houston and others, Texas declared independence from Mexico. The Alamo wall was breached, Santa Anna's army is moving through Texas, and Sam Houston is trying to form another army.

Remember, Santa Anna's army was no slouch. They were a professional bunch. They had defeated all of those other folks in Mexico that had sought independence and revolted against the dictatorship. They were well trained and had yet to lose a battle. In history, this is called a "runaway scrape." For Texans who live between San Antonio and Louisiana, move toward the United States, the runaway scrape.

Sam Houston is trying to find an army and design an army. Meanwhile, Santa Anna is feeling undefeatable. So he approaches the area of what is now called "the plains of San Jacinto." That's outside of Houston, on the eastern side of Houston, where the Buffalo River meets Harrisburg. And on a peninsula there in a marsh, Sam Houston had decided he was going to fight.

Yet to have fought a battle, the Mexican Army yet to be defeated, General Sam, as we call him, had an army of about 900 that he had assembled. Once again, volunteers, once again people from all over the United States, and once again Tejanos, Texans of Spanish descent, had assembled together to do battle really on April 22, 1836; however, Sam Houston assembled a war council. His commander said, "We're not waiting until tomorrow."

Battles usually take place in the morning when the sun comes up, but on an afternoon in the heat of the day, Sam Houston decided he was going to attack the Mexican forces of Santa Anna. Tradition primarily says that Sam Houston was busy and occupied by the Yellow Rose of Texas, Emily Mor-

gan, who was of mixed race and was keeping Santa Anna occupied in an encounter and kept him from noticing the Texas Army being assembled.

That's legend, tradition, maybe based on a little historical fact. But we honor Emily Morgan in our history, and we've named a building for her because of what she accomplished in the Texas Revolution, the first Yellow Rose of Texas.

The Texans assembled on the high plains, and they marched in broad daylight. There were so few of them they had to make one column. They were led also by Captain Juan Seguin. Juan Seguin was a Tejano. He had a cavalry regiment. It wasn't really a regiment. It was just a handful of Tejanos. And to make sure that Captain Seguin and his Tejanos weren't mistaken for Santa Anna's army, Sam Houston had Juan Seguin put playing cards in their hat bands so they would be recognized as loyalists to Texas and not to Santa Anna. In those days I understand the playing card was not small like we have today, but they were rather large playing cards.

And they stuck those in their hats, the headbands of their sombreros. The fight was on. The Texans come down the hill, catching the enemy by surprise. It was an overwhelming defeat to Santa Anna's army, his first defeat. In 18 minutes, half of the Mexican Army was killed and the other half was captured. There were more captured than in the Texas Army. There were about 900 Texans, about 1,800 Mexicans thereabouts; and they were captured.

Santa Anna got away. He's later found to have changed his presidential commander-in-chief dictator outfit into a private. When he's captured, he looks like a private. He's brought into the campgrounds. His troops saw who he was, and they stood up and saluted him; and Sam Houston had captured the president and commander and dictator of the enemy, Santa Anna.

Texas declared its independence on March 2, 1836. It was realized on April 21, 1836. Texas claimed land—here's a map of what Texas looked like and claimed to be Texas in 1836 after the Battle of San Jacinto, all of what now is Texas. But there's more land. Part of New Mexico, Colorado, Oklahoma, Kansas, and part of Wyoming was claimed by Texas. In fact, Texas ceded this land to the United States after Texas became part of the United States because Texas was a country for 9 years. Sam Houston was its President. It had its own army. It had to fight off the Mexican Army again to invaders, and it remained a Republic for 9 years.

Then Texas decided to join the Union. It wasn't easy. It was not something that was popular to put Texas in the United States. In fact, it could not get in by a treaty. It takes two-thirds of a vote by the Senate for a treaty to be signed. So it was a joint resolution. Texas got into the United States by two votes when a Senator, as I understand it, from Louisiana changed his

vote and voted for the admission of Texas.

Those of us from Texas, because of our history, because of the people who are there of all races, have a unique spirit, in my opinion. It is the spirit of freedom, but that's the spirit of America. You know, our history is not really based on what happened in the 13 colonies. Our history is based independent of that, but it's the same. It's a spirit of liberty and freedom from oppression, whether it's King George, III, or whether it's a dictator named Santa Anna.

On April 21, we celebrate San Jacinto Day. On Saturday there will be a reenactment of the Battle of San Jacinto. We have a monument called the San Jacinto Monument there on the marshes of San Jacinto. It looks very similar to the Washington Monument, except, of course, it's taller than the Washington Monument. The star on top of the monument makes it taller than the Washington Monument. And as a side note, the Texas State Capitol is taller than this Capitol right here by some 15 feet.

□ 1430

The point is, Mr. Speaker, that history is important. Our history is important. People who lived before us who fought for liberty—who volunteered to fight oppression even though the odds were overwhelming that many gave up their lives for that—they are as important and they are as much a part of our tradition as the young men and women we have now fighting for America's interests all over the world; and they, like those volunteers in the Texas War of Independence, are volunteers, raising their hands to stand between us and tyranny.

So we honor those folks who fought and made Texas a country for 9 years. We are proud of that, and it is important that all of us come to remember our history.

And that's just the way it is.

I yield back the balance of my time.

APPOINTMENT AS MEMBERS TO COMMISSION TO ELIMINATE CHILD ABUSE AND NEGLECT FATALITIES

The SPEAKER pro tempore. The Chair announces the Speaker's appointment, pursuant to section 3 of the Protect Our Kids Act of 2012 (Pub. L. 112-275), and the order of the House of January 3, 2013, of the following individuals on the part of the House to the Commission to Eliminate Child Abuse and Neglect Fatalities:

Ms. Susan Dreyfus, Milwaukee, Wisconsin

Ms. Cassie Statuto Bevan, Derwood, Maryland

CURRENT EVENTS IN REVIEW

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